

Remarks

Reconsideration of this Application is respectfully requested. The proposed amendments are made solely to advance prosecution of the claims. The amendments do not add claims without canceling an equal number of pending claims, do not require further searching, do not create new issues and place the application in condition for allowance or better form for appeal.

Upon entry of the foregoing amendment, claims 1-4 and 6-14 are pending in the application, with claims 1 and 9 being the independent claims. Claims 9-14 were previously withdrawn. Claim 5 was previously cancelled. Claim 1 has been amended. Support for the amendment to claim 1 can be found throughout the application as filed, e.g., in originally filed claim 5. These changes are believed to introduce no new matter, and their entry is respectfully requested.

Based on the above amendment and the following remarks, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all outstanding objections and rejections and that they be withdrawn.

Miscellaneous Matter

Applicants thank the Examiner for reconsideration and removal of the rejection of claim 1-7 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a).

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1, 3, 4 and 6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by Cook et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 5,717,083, "Cook") as evidenced by Agrawal et

al. (*PNAS* 85:7079-7083 (1988)) and www.newton.dep.anl.gov. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Specifically, the Examiner alleged that Cook teaches oligomeric compounds comprising phosphoroamidate-linked PEG. Solely to advance prosecution, claim 1 has been amended to delete the term "phosphoroamidate linkage." Thus, the claimed invention is not anticipated by Cook. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the outstanding rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102(b).

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1, 3, 4 and 6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as allegedly being unpatentable over Tullis (U.S. Pat. No. 4,904,582) and Goodchild (*Bioconj. Chem.* 1:167-187 (1990)). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Specifically, the Examiner alleged that Tullis describes oligonucleotide conjugates for transport across cellular membranes. The Examiner acknowledges that Tullis does not teach an oligonucleotide covalently linked to PEG via a phosphoramidate linkage or an acetal bond. However, the Examiner alleged that Goodchild teaches that conjugate groups can be covalently linked to oligonucleotides by phosphoramidate linkage. Solely to advance prosecution, claim 1 has been amended to delete the term "phosphoroamidate linkage" and to recite an acetal linkage. Neither Tullis, Goodchild or any combination of both teach an oligonucleotide covalently linked to the hydrophilic polymer via and acid cleavable linkage, which is an acetal. Thus, each and every element of the claim has not been taught and a prima facie case of obviousness has not

been established. In light of the above, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the outstanding rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103.

Conclusion

All of the stated grounds of objection and rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding objections and rejections and that they be withdrawn. Applicants believe that a full and complete reply has been made to the outstanding Office Action and, as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided.

Prompt and favorable consideration of this Amendment and Reply is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: FEBRUARY 12, 2010

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